

## 4.2 Core content: Option B

### The 20th century: International Relations since 1919

The Core Content in Option B focuses on seven Key Questions:

- 1 Were the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?
- 2 To what extent was the League of Nations a success?
- 3 Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?
- 4 Who was to blame for the Cold War?
- 5 How effectively did the USA contain the spread of Communism?
- 6 How secure was the USSR's control over Eastern Europe, 1948–c.1989?
- 7 How effective has the United Nations Organisation been?

#### 1 Were the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?

##### **Focus Points**

- What were the motives and aims of the Big Three at Versailles?
- Why did all the victors not get everything they wanted?
- What was the impact of the peace treaty on Germany up to 1923?
- Could the treaties be justified at the time?

##### **Specified Content**

- The peace treaties of 1919–23:
  - o the roles of individuals such as Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George in the peacemaking process
  - o the impact of the treaties on the defeated countries
  - o contemporary opinions about the treaties.

#### 2 To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

##### **Focus Points**

- How successful was the League in the 1920s?
- How far did weaknesses in the League's organisation make failure inevitable?
- How far did the Depression make the work of the League more difficult?
- How successful was the League in the 1930s?

**Specified Content**

- The League of Nations:
  - o strengths and weaknesses in its structure and organisation
  - o successes and failures in peacekeeping during the 1920s
  - o the impact of the World Depression on the work of the League after 1929
  - o the failures of the League in the 1930s, including Manchuria and Abyssinia.

### 3 Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?

**Focus Points**

- What were the long-term consequences of the peace treaties of 1919–23?
- What were the consequences of the failures of the League in the 1930s?
- How far was Hitler's foreign policy to blame for the outbreak of war in 1939?
- Was the policy of appeasement justified?
- How important was the Nazi-Soviet Pact?
- Why did Britain and France declare war on Germany in September 1939?

**Specified Content**

- The collapse of international order in the 1930s
- The increasing militarism of Germany, Italy and Japan
- Hitler's foreign policy to 1939:
  - o the Saar
  - o remilitarisation of the Rhineland
  - o involvement in the Spanish Civil War
  - o Anschluss with Austria
  - o appeasement
  - o crises over Czechoslovakia and Poland
  - o the outbreak of war.

### 4 Who was to blame for the Cold War?

**Focus Points**

- Why did the USA-USSR alliance begin to break down in 1945?
- How had the USSR gained control of Eastern Europe by 1948?
- How did the USA react to Soviet expansionism?
- What were the consequences of the Berlin Blockade?
- Who was the more to blame for starting the Cold War: the USA or the USSR?

**Specified Content**

- The origins of the Cold War:
  - o the 1945 summit conferences and the breakdown of the USA-USSR alliance in 1945–6
  - o Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe to 1948, and American reactions to it
  - o the occupation of Germany and the Berlin Blockade.

## 5 How effectively did the USA contain the spread of Communism?

**Focus Points**

This Key Question will be explored through case studies of the following:

- America and events in Cuba, 1959–62
- American involvement in Vietnam.

**Specified Content**

- events of the Cold War:
  - o case studies of:
  - o American reactions to the Cuban revolution, including the missile crisis and its aftermath
  - o American involvement in the Vietnam War.

## 6 How secure was the USSR's control over Eastern Europe, 1948–c.1989?

**Focus Points**

- Why was there opposition to Soviet control in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, and how did the USSR react to this opposition?
- How similar were events in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968?
- Why was the Berlin Wall built in 1961?
- What was the significance of 'Solidarity' in Poland for the decline of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe?
- How far was Gorbachev personally responsible for the collapse of Soviet control over Eastern Europe?

**Specified Content**

- Soviet power in Eastern Europe:
  - o resistance to Soviet power in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968)
  - o the Berlin Wall
  - o 'Solidarity' in Poland
  - o Gorbachev and the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

## 7 How effective has the United Nations Organisation been?

### **Focus Points**

- What are the functions of the UNO?
- How far has the organisation of the UNO hindered its effectiveness?
- Case studies of the UNO in action: the Korean War and the Congo.

### **Specified Content**

- The aims of the UNO, the organisation of the UNO, its agencies and their work
- The implications of the growth of membership: admission of developing nations and China
- Case studies of the work of the UNO in Korea (1950–3) and in the Congo (1960–3).